

NASA awards grant for Smithsonian global change exhibit

NASA's Mission to Planet Earth program has awarded a \$500,000 grant to the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Natural History to support planning for a new museum exhibition hall titled "Forces of Change."

"Forces of Change" will feature a series of regional case studies demonstrating the ways in which the Earth's environment is changing and how humans affect or are affected by these processes. Initial case studies on the Antarctic polar region, the Hawaiian islands, the Chesapeake Bay estuary and the Great Plains grasslands will offer museum visitors interactive, state-of-the-art displays on how natural forces influence their daily lives.

"NASA is excited to have the opportunity to work with the Museum of Natural History in communicating the results of the most recent studies of the global environment through an inventive forum that blends scientific research and educational outreach," said Robert Harriss, science division director for Mission to Planet Earth.

Additional programming in the form of books, film and lecture series, CD-ROM packages and classroom materials will be developed in conjunction with each case study. The exhibition will continually challenge visitors to learn more about the world in which they live and to think about their roles in shaping that world, according to

Acting Museum Director Donald Ortner.

"This generous grant from NASA enables the National Museum of Natural History to advance a ground-breaking exhibition which fully realizes our charter mission to be 'dedicated to understanding the natural world and our place in it,'" Ortner said. "We plan to create an exciting exhibition series to help visitors better understand the interdependencies between humans and the environment."

The "Forces of Change" project is being developed with extensive consultation among scientists, anthropologists and educators at the museum. Many other experts from outside the museum, including artists, photographers, environmental engineers and maritime histori-

ans, will also be involved in the project to ensure a thorough and balanced discussion of the topic, Ortner said. A date for the anticipated opening of the hall will be announced after the completion of the planning process.

NASA's Mission to Planet Earth is a comprehensive science research enterprise designed to observe the Earth's land, atmosphere and oceans from a global perspective using satellites, aircraft and ground-based measurements. Such studies will yield improved weather forecasts, better tools for managing agriculture and forests, information for ocean-related industries and coastal planners, and, eventually, an ability to predict how the Earth's climate will change in the future.

MCC open for STS-75 viewing

The Mission Control Center viewing room will be open to JSC and contractor badged employees and their families during portions of the STS-75 mission.

Employees will be allowed to visit the MCC from 1-5 p.m. Saturday and 11:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Wednesday.

Employees must wear their badges and escort family members through the lobby of Bldg. 30 South. Children under five will not be permitted. No flash photography or loud talking will be permitted at any time. Because of the dynamic nature of shuttle mission, viewing hours may be changed or canceled without notice.

For the latest information on the schedule, call the Employee Information Service at x36765.

New features enhance NASA Shuttle Web

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them to the WORLDMAP program.

"WORLDMAP is running on a laptop, and sending a snapshot of its screen to a Mission Operations. We're just allowing the shuttle home page curator to link to that server," said Neil Woodbury, group leader for portable on-board computing and tools. "If users are running Netscape or Internet Explorer, the server will automatically update the shuttle's position every 60 seconds."

A small window in the lower left portion of the image shows the overall world view. The largest part of the image shows the Earth below from the same vantage, but magnified eight times. The application's title bar includes the current Greenwich Mean Time, Mission Elapsed Time, latitude, longitude and altitude. The map title bar displays the name of the country the shuttle is flying over. The timer window provides a variety of information, including the next S-band and Ku-band acquisition and loss of signal through the Tracking and Data Relay Satellite System, and 45 minute sunrise and sunset times on orbit.

Sometimes, areas will be outlined in red and red numerals will be displayed in the large map. These are upcoming Earth observations photography opportunities. The crew on board can click on these red areas and get additional information about the site and the best lenses and film speeds to use when photographing the area.

The new display is available alongside the existing Distributed Earth Modeling and Shuttle display. To access it, visit the NASA Shuttle Web at <http://shuttle.nasa.gov> and click on the "Tracking" button.

Other new features on the NASA Shuttle Web include, crew seating assignments during ascent and reentry; a cross-indexed alphabetical subject list, archives that contain facts on every shuttle mission ever flown, and a daily update page to highlight the most interesting shuttle happenings of the coming day.



NEAR LIFTOFF—Engineers at Cape Canaveral Air Station prepare the Near Earth Asteroid Rendezvous spacecraft for its three-year mission to rendezvous with the asteroid, 433 Eros. The installation of protective faring is one of the final preflight activities before liftoff. The NEAR mission began at 2:43 p.m. CST last Friday from Launch Complex 17 and rendezvous is expected in 1999.

Space station operations, utilization teams consolidated

By Linda Copley

The Operations and the Utilization Offices within the Space Station Program Office have consolidated in a move to streamline program management and improve efficiency and redesign costs.

Former Operations Office Manager Chirol Epp was named acting manager of the team, with William Bennett as acting deputy manager. Maurice Kennedy was named assistant manager for O&U integration and will provide the technical integration required by this consolidated effort.

"The structure is a realignment of the operations and utilization functions," Epp said, "and clearly defines program versus center responsibilities. This office will be responsible for program-level requirements, policies, integration, budgets and schedules. This includes oversight of all the station operations and utilization



Epp

activities and at the institutions. The institutions will implement all the functions such as cargo integration, facilities development flight planning and crew training."

The new team includes the O&U Mission Management and Planning Integrated Planning Team with Susan Creasy as acting manager; O&U Manifesting and International Partner Coordination IPT with Kimberly Doering as acting manager; Ernest Smith as acting manager of the Space Station Operations IPT; Payload and Cargo Integration IPT with Gary Johnson as acting manager; and Research Accommodations and Customer Integration IPT with Anil Singhal as acting manager. Anthony Butina will serve as acting manager of Logistics and Maintenance IPT and Mary Mechelay has been named as acting manager of the Sustaining Engineering IPT.

Career Plus+ briefings in Bldg. 30

Human Resources will present details of JSC's new retirement transition program, "Careers Plus+", in the Bldg. 30 Auditorium today and Wednesday.

Detailed information about the three options available will be presented at 9 a.m. today, and 2 p.m. Wednesday. Handouts from these briefings will also be posted on the

Human Resources Office Home Page, which can be accessed on the following Internet address: <http://hro.jsc.nasa.gov/hro/> Employees with specific questions involving personal retirement options should call or visit Employee Services in Bldg. 45, Rm. 140, x32681. The staff can provide detailed retirement calculations and individual counseling.

Computer users need to report virus; vaccine available

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on your screen and erase your hard disk, you will execute that program without knowing it. You don't necessarily know what is in that macro - that's where the danger is," Snapp said.

The Microsoft Office products widely used at JSC all use a program language called Visual Basic. Macros run Visual Basic commands, and will work on either Windows or Macintosh platforms.

Even though early viruses didn't intentionally cause damage, they were not benign, said Frank Martin,

JSC deputy security manager.

"Even if we say they're not intentionally damaging, they will cause headaches because they make machines not work well," Martin added.

What is the best way to protect against contracting one of these viruses?

"Don't open any Word document until you have the latest tools designed to find and remove the virus," Snapp said. In particular, he said, fight the urge to click on attachments sent to you by E-mail, especially if they are coming from

someone outside the NASA family.

The newer viruses can reformat hard drives, delete open documents, change colors of the users display screen. None of these have yet been reported at a NASA site, but it is probably only a matter of time, they said.

At JSC, 50 to 60 virus instances are reported each month, but Snapp and Martin say the tracking process probably does not capture the breadth of the macro virus spread.

Word viruses are going very much underreported, Martin said. The reason is that the program that

fixes the problem has been widely distributed to users and they have not always reported acquiring the virus because they have been able to clear it up themselves. Microsoft is expected to make available new tools that will combat the destructive macro viruses and JSC is seeking to distribute them, as well.

Users can get the latest "vaccine" from their computer security officers or their computer service technicians. But Snapp and Martin ask that users report any infestation to the ISD Help Desk, x34800, so that they can track the spread.

Space Center Houston offers membership

Space Center Houston membership passes offer visitors a host of benefits not included in regular ticket prices and are available now for JSC employees who want to enjoy spring activities.

For \$29.95, members receive a pass that allows unlimited admission to all attractions for one full year, free parking, express check-in and a 10 percent discount in the Space Trader Gift Shop and Zero-G Diner.

Members also are invited to "members only" previews of exhibits and events, are given advance notice of post-flight astronaut briefings and receive a bimonthly newsletter. Membership privileges include a 10 percent discount and early registration for all educational programs including the spring break, summer day camps and overnight camp-ins.

SCH offers an annual family pass for \$59.95 that includes all the benefits of a single member pass plus private screenings of new IMAX films.

On-going activities at SCH include the display of a Russian Vostok capsule—the same type used to launch the first man into space.

One new feature for visitors to enjoy is "Close Encounters." Every Tuesday morning at 10:30 a.m.

through May, JSC scientists and engineers will give special presentations and bring visitors closer to space in the Mission Status Center. Visitors also can learn more about how lasers and holograms are being used in today's industry, medicine, space travel, communications and entertainment in the "Lasers and Holograms: Discovering the Splendid Light" display.

Spring Break Camps are on the agenda for '96. Day Camps will feature Rocket "Engine"-uity, Shuttle Orientation, Lego Exploration and If It Suits You activities for children of all ages. This year the program has expanded in conjunction with the University of Houston-Clear Lake to conduct camps at local libraries. In addition, special programs have been created for children ages five to seven. Day camps will be held from March 11-15 and March 18-22.

Summer activities will feature hot air balloon workshops specifically designed for children. Activities include the history of hot air balloons and their role in aviation, the mysteries of air and launch of a small-scale hot air balloon.

For more information on memberships or upcoming attractions call SCH at 244-2105.



Wild Life presentation set at Gilruth

The Total Health program will host "Wildlife of the JSC Area," at 4:30 p.m. Thursday at the Gilruth Center.

Texas Game Warden Paul Muller will be on hand and provide information via slides and video about wildlife around JSC. Also live animals will be on hand including snakes, caymen and several other creatures. Employees with questions concerning snakes, deer, armadillos and other animals seen around the center are encouraged to attend and have their questions answered by the game warden.

For more information call Larry Wier at x30301.